

## TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

### A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

Comments and Criticisms Based Upon the Happenings of the Day—Historical and News Notes.

It takes four men, a revolver, and ten different kinds of threats to get checks out of a Chicago lawyer who's a cripple. And then he stops payment on the checks and has the four men locked up.

It was in a huge cave in the mountains near Barcelona that the Anarchists had their principal bomb factory. It is significant that the peasantry should have known of it, but never betrayed the secret to the police.

ALPHONSE DAUDET'S thorn in the flesh is the letter-writer. No other novelist, he declares, can be so pestered by unknown correspondents as he is. Women and young girls are the chief delinquents, their object in writing being to get him to use them as heroines in his next novel. They invariably inclose photographs.

SOME novel points in accident insurance will be brought out in the case of a Rochester man who brings suit to recover \$25 per week when "killed up from the bit of a spider." The insurance claims exemption on the ground that it is "not liable for accidents from contact with poisonous substances."

It was Henry W. Paine, the eminent Boston lawyer, who died the other day, that made to a chief justice who interrupted his argument with the remark, "Mr. Paine, you know that this is not law," the quiet reply, "It was law until your honor spoke," and proceeded complacently with his argument.

A FRENCH journalist has devised a plan for making Gibraltar untenable for the British by means of a diplomatic alliance between France, Spain, and the Moors. If Gibraltar is to be made untenable it must be by diplomacy, for several futile attempts to dislodge the British have been made since they took the rock in 1704. During the American revolution France and Spain joined in a two-year's siege of the stronghold, but without avail and the scarlet flag of England, which no Parliament would haul down and live—still waves from the summit of the crag.

WHILE hundreds of thousands of people in England are in dire want or on the verge of want the British Parliament, wise in its age, is about to continue giving Duke Alfred of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha \$50,000 a year for being Duke of Edinburgh. In his capacity as Duke of Edinburgh Duke Alfred is of no more service to the people of England than is the Pa Hanq of Mehang. Why he should be given \$50,000 a year of the people's money is more than the finite mind can understand. And why a country professing democratic principles should so tenaciously and with such reverence to customs of ages when kings were hedged with divinity is another problem too deep for the finite mind to solve. Parliament will probably continue the gift, not that it loves democracy less but nine-spot dukes more.

A NEW YORK medical man has announced that transfusion has been applied successfully to the treatment of another disease—to wit: epilepsy. The material injected is prepared from the vital organs of the sheep, the greatest care being exercised in securing the matter employed, and fresh preparations are considered necessary every day. The hypodermic puncture is made in the side, just above hip joint. The aim in this treatment is to supply the nervous force with naturally-prepared food from a clean, healthy animal, which will at once assimilate with the blood and nourish without unduly stimulating the nervous system. It is claimed that numerous injections have been made without bad effects in any case, which is at least good negative testimony—better than offered for the alleged value of some specific remedies.

SUBMARINE earthquakes doubtless often occur, but it is not often that they are reported unless they cast up an island to leave a record of their existence. A vessel that has lately put in at Honduras reports passing over what was probably the center of the disturbance. When the waves struck the vessel it was as if it had struck a rock. First one end of the vessel was up and then the other. The shock lasted only four or five minutes, but in that time no one could stand upright, and all expected that the vessel would break in the middle. Possibly some vessels never heard of are wrecked in this way. The submarine earthquakes are most common in tropical or semi-tropical seas, or near coasts where such phenomena are most often experienced on land. The Pacific Ocean has

doubtless many more submarine volcanoes and earthquakes than has any part of the Atlantic. In some portions of the Pacific Ocean the appearance of new islands and disappearance of those formerly known is quite a common thing, though its commonness hardly keeps it from being startling to those navigating those seas.

The cost of strikes is not appreciated as it should be. Among the causes of hard times there is none which is more productive of hardship than this season of idleness, both for labor and capital, while the contest as to which shall be supreme is going on. In the most exhaustive recent strike between English coal miners and coal owners, the loss to the coal owners, transportation companies, and coal consumers is estimated at \$74,000,000. That to the miners and others thrown out of employment by dealers in coal is estimated at \$27,000,000. The recent strike on the Lehigh Valley railroad, in this country cost the company \$3,000,000. It has undoubtedly cost the workmen engaged in it nearly or quite as much. These losses, especially of working men, are not easily repaired. All the world over the wage earner expends for living very nearly up to the amount he receives. Comparatively few accumulate anything for the old age that is sure to come. When work and wages stop there is an enforced economy, but there is also with it a load of debt which it requires months and even years of property to pay.

Tax revelation that some of the Michigan railroads are carrying no brakemen on their passenger trains is a most startling one. The worst of the matter is that the Governor says there is no law to compel the roads to give the public both the safety and the assurance of safety which the brakemen are supposed to give. The Westinghouse air brake is a great invention, and has made the best of all contributions to the safety of the traveling public, but the Jackson accident has shown that it is not to be relied on in all emergencies. Conductors and baggagemen have their own duties to perform, and they are inconsistent with the watching of the signals of the engineer. It follows that the absence of the brakeman is the same as the existence of a constant menace to life and limb on moving trains. The opinion has been expressed that the railroad companies may be compelled by mandamus to give the public all possible assurance of safety, and that the public does not have to wait until it is crushed and deal under the cars before it can obtain redress for its wrongs. However this may be, the railroad commissioner ought to be invested with the power to correct the evil that is said to exist on some of the roads.

BEFORE Jenner discovered and Lady Mary Wortley Montague preached vaccination small-pox was the scourge of humanity. Compared with the multitude of its victims the victims of all other diseases, including the still dread pathosis, were but as tens to thousands. Gradually inoculation became general, and in most civilized countries compulsory, and gradually small-pox lost its terrors with its power, until now it figures very little in the death rate of the world. Practically it has been stamped out. These facts are as incontrovertible as they are well known, yet in England and even in the United States there are persons so ignorant or so blind as to fall or to refuse to see them. They cry that infants sometimes die after vaccination, as though no unvaccinated infants ever failed to survive. They point out that vaccinated persons are not proof against jaundice, eruptions from the skin and other ailments, as if Jenner and his disciples claimed that the lymph was a magical charm not only against small-pox but against all the ills to which our flesh is heir. But they are of little influence and no importance. If they refuse protection from a fatal disease because they fear the small annoyances of trifling complaints that is their affair. At least the rest of us cannot take infection from their corpses.

Not Law.  
Henry W. Paine, a prominent member of the Boston bar, whose death was announced recently enjoyed a considerable reputation for dry and pungent wit. One of the best of many stories about him is that of the Harvard student who met him in a Cambridge horse car reading a volume of the Massachusetts reports. "Why, Mr. Paine," said the young man, "I am surprised to find that you should find it necessary to read law in a horse car." "I am not reading law," responded Mr. Paine; "I am reading the decisions of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts."—New York Sun.

"Fam my lambs" reads a motto that hangs in a Wall street broker's office. It suggests itself that "Shear my lambs" would be more appropriate.

## OUR RURAL READERS.

### SOMETHING HERE THAT WILL INTEREST THEM.

Farm Property Is Now Freer from Debt Than It Ever Has Been Before—Arrangement of Fields and Pastures—Rotation of Crops.

On the Farm Side.  
For many years past the statements have been industriously circulated that a very large majority of the farms in the United States were mortgaged for more than they were worth. The deduction from this statement is that agriculture in this country was not a prosperous business. The impression was strengthened by another that throughout the Northwest the loaning of money at high rates of interest on farm mortgages had been well-nigh universal, and that the borrowers were not paying up, but were suffering foreclosures. There was a grain of truth in all this, but it was not the whole truth nor the best part of it.

Two agricultural papers, the American Farmer and the American Agriculturist, have recently made a searching inquiry into the truth of these statements. It points out that three-fourths of all the farms in the United States are owned free of incumbrance. Out of every hundred American farms more than seventy-one are fully paid for and less than thirty are mortgaged. The average mortgage represents only one-third the value of the farm on which it is secured. The total value of the farm mortgages in the whole country is hardly one-tenth of the total value of all our farms. In 1880 nearly one-fifth of the mortgage indebtedness was vested on farms, but in 1890 farm mortgages represented only one-seventh of the country's indebtedness on real estate. Four-fifths of the amount of debt on farms and homes was incurred for the commendable purpose of buying and improving the property, and a like proportion of the farms and homes were mortgaged for the same purpose.

In 1880 the mortgaged debt of the United States was about equally divided between urban lots and farm tracts. But in 1890 only 34 per cent. of that mortgaged debt was on acres, while 66 per cent. was upon urban property. Most of the facts have been drawn from census data. But there is no reason to suppose that they would be greatly modified if brought up to the present date. The truth is, farm property is freer from debt than it has been at any former time during the last quarter of a century. A very large proportion of farms are bought on credit, or they were a few years ago. A payment was made a mortgage for the back payments. In time he made the farm pay for itself, while all the while it supported a family. A large proportion of the agriculturists did better than this. They paid off their mortgages and then laid up money. The great increase in the proportion of urban mortgages results probably from speculations that have been going on in Western towns and cities during the last ten years. In real estate. But if the facts cited are approximately correct, and there is good authority behind them, no great industrial business has been prosecuted in this country with a greater average degree of prosperity than agriculture.—San Francisco Call.

### Arrangement of Fields and Pastures.

A farm divided into large fields, especially into long ones, can be cultivated to best advantage with least loss of time in turning at ends with plows and machines. In the ideal farm division, fences will be almost entirely dispensed with, facilitating cultivation, saving for tillage the land occupied by fences, also saving the great expense of building and repairing fences. The time has hardly arrived in this country for the general adoption of the practice of rolling stock. When it shall become necessary to economize in the use of land, when population shall begin to crowd upon the means of subsistence, pasturing arable lands will gradually cease.

So long as pasturing is continued every pasture should be provided with an abundance of pure, sweet living water. A flowing stream is generally considered very desirable in a pasture, but a creek often renders a good deal of land unfit for cultivation. It generally pursues a tortuous course, has more or less wet, marshy margin, and is not an economical method of watering stock. A well with a windmill and pump has recommendations, though where water can be brought from a spring and flow into a penstock the best conditions are afforded. In either pen or penstock, the overflow should be conducted away by an underdrain. No good farmer will suffer his stock to depend upon slough or swamp water, or to drink at filthy, stagnant pools. Such water must necessarily affect the health of stock and the wholesomeness of their products.—American Agriculturist.

### Rotation of Crops.

A rotation, to be profitable, must embody several distinct features. It must comprise crops that mature in different seasons of the year, in order that the labor of the farm may find profitable employment. This is imperative. It should consist of crops for which the ground can be prepared and the planting done at different seasons of the year. It should consist of crops that draw as far as possible, on different elements of fertility in the soil, and, if possible, of some crops which restore the elements of fertility which have been exhausted by our crops. It should embrace both grain crops

and forage crops, and finally, should consist of one or more cleaning crops; that is, crops that either smother out weeds or furnish ample opportunity for destroying them in the cultivation demanded, for other reasons, by the crop. For the above reasons, rotation, whenever adopted, should contain, as far as possible, grain crops, grass crops and hoed crops, by the latter being meant such crops as require tillage in some form during their period of growth, as for instance, corn and potatoes in America, and potatoes, turnips, mangels, beets, &c., in Europe. As all ordinary rotation must necessarily contain shallow rooting crops, such as wheat, oats and corn, they should also contain deep rooting crops, such as the clover and what are known ordinarily as root crops. In addition to the above every rotation should contain crops that are soil feeders, as it must necessarily contain crops that are soil robbers—that is, crops that restore nitrogen, the most expensive and most important element of fertility, and crops that exhaust it, as, for example, all our grain crops, without exception. Applying these principles, let us consider a moment what rotations are practicable as far west as clovers can be grown.—Western Farm Journal.

Washing Windows.  
There is method in everything, and that there is method in the washing of windows shows simply that there is nothing too small but that method has a place in it. Probably eleven out of every dozen housemaids never care or consider whether it is better to wash a window on the outside or inside first, or whether there is the slightest reason for considering whether the sunshine falls on it during the washing or not. Yet these are two very important matters to consider. If the window is washed when the sun shines on it it is sure to show cloudy and streaky places from drying too rapidly, and if it is not washed on the inside first the dust and dirt which belong on the outside cannot be so easily distinguished. The correct method to clean window glass is first dust the sash and glass on the inside and wash the panes, with a little ammonia in the water, using a soft cloth to wipe off with and a soft paper to polish it after it is dry. When the inside is entirely finished, then begin on the outside, and you will see at once the advantage spoken of, for all the dirt and imperfections that would otherwise have been concealed from you will stand revealed in contrast with the clean surface of the inside. Wash the outside as you do the inside. The outer panes should be wiped as soon as possible after the rinsing, and should be polished thoroughly with a chamois or paper.

### Hints to Housekeepers.

ONCE a month is often enough to wash the hair. Too frequent washing is injurious.

A PECK of fresh lime in a damp cellar will absorb all moisture and prevent malarious troubles.

HALF a teaspoonful of sugar scattered over a dying fire is better than kerosene and has no element of danger.

A cup of warm milk flavored with orange-flower water or beef tea is excellent for an invalid just before retiring.

IVORY knife handles that have grown dark and yellow with age or bad usage may be whitened by rubbing with sandpaper.

REMOVE rust from steel knives by covering with sweet oil for two days; then rub with a lump of fresh lime until the rust disappears entirely.

ONE pint of bay rum and half an ounce of quinine rubbed into the scalp with a woolen cloth twice a day will prevent the hair from falling.

LAY a large muslin rug under the sewing machine to catch the shavings, clippings, and cuttings and save a great amount of sweeping and dusting.

POLISHED steel can be kept from rusting after cleaning, or when not in use. Take a cloth with a little sweet oil on it and wipe the steel over so that the surface may have a very light but warm coating of oil.

ONE of the hardest notions for the untrained nurse to give up is that beef tea is a valuable nutriment. The recent assertion of a writer in the American Lancet that many thousands of sick persons have been starved to death on beef tea is only a summing up of what physicians and experienced nurses have been trying to impress upon the minds of the laity for some time. Beef tea is a stimulant, light and evanescent, but to "live on beef tea," is simply impossible. The Lancet counsels that if it must be used, to remember that like plain tea, it should never be boiled. That method of making contributes a positive vice.

### Ice Water Without Ice.

The Colorado journalist, Mrs. Romney, has patented, among several other articles, a water cooler which does not require ice. It is a covered receptacle, of cellular brickware, manufactured of clay, sawdust, and asbestos fiber. In the process the sawdust is burned out, leaving the product cellular, or porous. The receptacle, with the water to be kept cool within, stands in a tray of galvanized iron, which holds water to a depth of two or three inches. By reason of the porosity of the cooler and the forces of the capillary attraction, the water in the tray constantly rises through the cellular walls of the receptacle, and is as constantly evaporated—thereby keeping the water inside as cool as it is usually drawn from a well or spring.

It is said that practice makes perfect. This bolsters up the quack doctor.

## A VEXED QUESTION.

Some New Thoughts Relative to the Servant and Girl Question.

At the last meeting of the Sun-set Club, says the Chicago Journal, Dr. Sarah Hackett Stevenson upbraided the housewives of Chicago for retrenching in these hard times by dispensing with their servants. She made a strong plea for the unemployed kitchen maids and showed that she was setting a good example by employing even more than usual; but there is another side to this question, and it is a very large and significant side.

During the last year the servant girl in and around Chicago has been a very independent and costly sort of creature. She has demanded so many privileges and so many dollars a week, and has done her work with such a lofty incompetence that hundreds of housewives in this city have preferred to do their work themselves rather than put up with the kind of service they were forced to pay for. These strained relations made a bonanza for the funny paragrapher, but they also resulted in a new order of things in many households. Many women have learned to depend upon the laundries for their washing, and upon canned meats, fruits, and bakery products for their provisions, and have gotten into a new channel in which a servant would be asuperfluous.

The girls that now throng the employment bureaus are largely to blame for their own condition. They have demanded wages that could not be permanent, and have lived extravagantly while their brief power lasted. Now they are reaping the reward—expensive habits and no work. It is a moment of great moral danger to them, but the cause for it is entirely of their own making. The most unreasonable working woman or man is, as a rule, the most unprovoked. An extreme instance coming under the knowledge of the writer will serve as type: It is that of a woman who came to Chicago last spring, made \$8 a day all through the summer at a World's Fair restaurant, and is already penniless. And such are the very ones that would be most intolerable in a private family. These heads have been turned, they are spoiled for the legitimate employment for which they are fitted.

The greatest charity that could be given these women would be to readjust their ideas of the value of money and of their own importance. An Evanston servant girl who gets \$5 a week recently bought a \$300 dress, when her mistress, who had never owned a garment costing half that amount, expressed surprise, she was told to mind her own affairs. This is the class of girls that we are now being asked to employ as a matter of charity. They are as extravagant of their employers' time and materials as of their own earnings. They are as impatient and hard to instruct in their own duties as in matters of personal economy. The thrifty housewife who has come through the expiating experiences of the World's Fair year and finally adjusted her affairs in a new groove where they run smoothly without a kitchen servant, is excusable if she hesitates long before she submits her neck to the yoke again.

### Cure for Tobacco Habit.

Immediately after rising in the morning cleanse your mouth with cool, fresh water and cut a piece of dry bread (the dryer the better), taking care to chew it until it is thoroughly moistened with saliva that may be swallowed without inconvenience. Cleanse your mouth again, and do so after each regular meal, which you should eat slowly so as to avoid drinking anything till you have finished. During the day your "mouth will water" for something, but let nothing enter it except healthy food and drink; and you will be tempted to spit, but refrain from it: it is the earnest prayer of your stomach for saliva. Swallow it, for it will do you good, particularly if you have been troubled with that uneasiness called "heartburn." If you will follow these directions strictly for a few days only, you will be cured of a nuisance second only to "alcoholism," and feel so much better that you will not desire to return to the tobacco habit. This is written from our own personal experience. Thirty-six years ago we were an abject slave to "the weed," both as chewer and smoker, and heartburn was our daily affliction, which would yield to nothing but our swallowing the copious flow of saliva that attended it; and as that practice never failed to give relief, we inferred that saliva was an important factor of digestion and determined to waste it no longer. Nature did the rest and in less than a week we were free from all the evil effects of tobacco, and have not been troubled with heartburn since.—Word and Work.

### Warmth in Jewelry.

There is an ancient and honorable anecdote in which a gayly clad woman in evening dress complaining of cold is advised by an elderly quaker to "put on another breastpin." There seems to be enduring fun in the idea of the warmth of jewelry, says the New York Sun. As a matter of fact, jewelry properly disposed raises the temperature perceptibly. The slight friction of a necklace keeps the throat warm. A diamond necklace or a strand of pearls may ward off bronchitis or laryngitis. Children who used to wear coral beads have been known to catch cold when these were taken off. Bracelets keep the wrists warm. Every woman accustomed to wearing bracelets knows how cold her wrists feel when these are removed. The handsomer the bracelet the warmer she feels. Precious stones make the blood to dance. A Philadelphia woman who has

studied the wearing as a hygienic measure says that the entire circulation may be raised or lowered by wearing the proper jewelry at the wrist. She has pulse-coolers for summer and pulse-warmers for winter. Her pulse-coolers are spheroids of rose crystals linked together with filigree silver. The theory is that these spheroids absorb cold instead of heat. The pulse-warmers are strips of asbestos, which is a non-conductor, enveloped in embossed velvet and fastened with diamond buckles.

### They Rode for One Fare.

Coming down town on an Olive street car, a woman got on at Seventeenth street with four small children. The delay was noticeable, because the conductor had to help on the oldest girl, then the boy with a square cap and long curls, then another little girl, and lastly, the woman, who carried a child apparently about 10 months old and of indeterminate sex.

The young ones were all graded in size and were small for their apparent ages. The mother bestowed them about some of the men in the car getting up to make room. The car went on down town and the people were beginning to forget about it when they heard the conductor say in a voice of shrill astonishment as he looked at the solitary and lone nickel in his hand:

"Is none of them over 4, mam?"  
There was a modest murmur of disclaim from the woman.  
"Not one of them?"  
She shook her head. The passengers took an interest. She looked at them with an earnest, honest gaze.  
"Four children and not one of them over 4," said the conductor, sadly. But he rung up the fare and went out on the back platform. He counted on his fingers and multiplied and muttered, and when the woman got off he was still mumbling and multiplying to himself.—Post-Dispatch.

### That Funny Little Monkey.

Jocko, the oldest exhibit in the monkey-house at the Zoo, Central Park fights his many battles with sawdust. Jocko comes from Africa. He once adopted an orphaned rhesus monkey baby and created quite a name for himself. Since then he has had two wives, both of whom have died, and now he has the third of whom he is very fond. He is so much in love with her that if any one attempts to get her he gets furious and if there is any missile handy he lets it fly at the intruder or into the crowd. He has learned that a handful of sawdust thrown into faces of a gazing crowd causes great discomfort. Lately two elderly women approached Jocko's cage.

"Oh, what a funny little monkey!" one observed to the other, singling out Mrs. Jocko and handing her a nut. Jocko was on the watch, and both women received several handfuls of sawdust plump in the face. It ran down their necks, got into one woman's ears and into the hair of both. Jocko followed this up with two or three crusts of bread, an apple core and a sticky piece of banana.

"That monkey's trained," Keeper Cook remarked. "He knew that feeding the animals isn't allowed. He's a great help to me in the discharge of my duties."—New York Advertiser.

### Reindeer.

M. Nordenskiöld, in his voyage in the Vega to the Asiatic shore of Behring Sea, noticed a marked difference between the Log Chukchs, the inhabitants of the shore, and the Reindeer Chukchs of the interior. The latter were better clothed and in better circumstances. Both showed a kindness to their animals unusual in semi-savage peoples. The Coast Chukchs always carried dog shoes, neatly made of bags of soft leather, with straps attached, to put on their dogs' feet if cut by the sharp snow. The herd of a Reindeer Chukch came down from the pasture every morning to meet their master. The leading stag came first, and had his good morning by gently rubbing his nose against his master's hands. All the other deer were then allowed to do the same, the master taking each by the horn and carefully examining its condition. The inspection over the whole herd wheeled and returned to the pasture. It would be difficult to name another beast of burden so tame and so efficient as the reindeer. A good reindeer will travel 100 miles a day over frozen snow, and can draw a weight of 300 pounds, surpassing the dog by one-half in distance and two-thirds in drawing power.—The Spectator.

### What We Are and What We Think We Are.

The editor of Scribner's Magazine thus makes a plain distinction between these two sometimes widely different conditions.

As is the difference between what a man is and what he thinks he is, so will his success be. With that difference great, the success will be small, with that difference small, the success will be great. I don't say that this rule should be incorporated in the Ready Reckoner beside that un-falling truth that 2,280 feet make a mile. There are other elements constantly for or against a man's success in addition to the one under consideration. But allowing for these the rule has its value.

Erico son strenuously maintained that "each man has an aptitude born with him to do easily some feat impossible to any other." It is an attractive theory, one that many people have wished they could believe while finding themselves unable to do. From the mass of men their native aptitudes, if they exist, are so deeply hidden. Perhaps, though, if it were not for the hallucination born with each man, his aptitude would be in clearer view.